

CHAPTER 94

July 17, 2011

"Sweet mother of fuck; who'd you get in a fist fight with?"

"I could ask you the same."

Justin had been sitting on the rooftop, overlooking the schoolyard when Yu had made his way up there, for what reason, Justin didn't bother to ask. Perhaps it was that he didn't really care why Yu was here; perhaps it was just that he was too caught off-guard by the black-eye Yu was currently sporting. Justin shrugged slightly before rubbing at his own black-eye, before Yu took a seat next to him, looking over the edge of the building, down towards the ground below. Chie had one hell of a swing, that much was sure.

"Well you know how Chie gets when she's pissed..." Justin groaned a bit, removing his fingers from underneath his bruised eye. It was actually pretty sore now that Yu mentioned it; he just hadn't noticed it because he was so deep in thought. Yu could tell he was deep in thought too, just from the way his eyes seemed to stare at the people below him, his feet dangling over the edge. Justin had to wonder why Ai didn't just try to jump from this side; there was no fence for her to climb over. In a way, he was happy she hadn't taken the obvious approach. He wouldn't have been able to stop her in time.

"What'd you do this time?" Yu questioned humorously. Justin took a drag at the cigarette in his mouth before turning to stare at Yu, a slight expression of annoyance on his face. He wasn't sure what annoyed him more, Yu assuming that this was his fault, or the fact that he was taking this as a joke. Though, Justin supposed he didn't really know what happened. To him, it just looked like Justin made one smart ass remark too many and got a boot to his face. Justin shook his head a bit.

"Nothing. It was just a misunderstanding..." Justin explained, leaving out all the details. Not necessarily because he didn't want Yu to know, it was just that he didn't want to think about it. Not even just the part with Chie calling him a cheating scumbag, or the part where she told him she loved him; no he didn't want to think of what had lead up to that conversation, what had lead up to him getting a book to the skull. Yu crossed his arms and gave Justin a look of disappointment.

"Don't hold back or anything." Yu remarked, not buying Justin's bullshit for even a second. He always knew when Justin was trying to hold something back from him, or when he wasn't telling the full story. This was no exception. Justin stared at Yu for a moment, before sighing and taking another puff of his smoke. He really fucking hated when Yu decided to play love detective. Mostly because he could always get

Justin to spill the beans. God forbid he ever get interrogated; he'd never be able to keep his mouth shut.

"I'm just going to assume Chie already told you about Ai..." Justin groaned a bit. He told her not to, but he knew she couldn't keep a secret worth shit. Yu rubbed a bit at the back of his head. He knew he wasn't supposed to let Justin know she had told him... But he was up here for a reason. She said he was really beating himself up over it, for some reason or another, and Yu figured he was probably up here thinking about it, so here he was. And it seemed his prediction was right on the money. The way Justin was looking over the edge... He was still thinking about what could have happened if he couldn't stop Ai.

"...Yeah." Yu eventually choked up. He could lie all he wanted, the minute Justin made that remark Yu knew that Justin knew he knew. Try saying that ten times fast. Justin shook his head a bit, only slightly aggravated that Chie had already went behind his back like that. It's like that whole conversation about trust yesterday meant nothing to her. Honestly, sometimes he wondered why he was in love with this girl.

"Dammit. I told her not to say anything..." Justin mumbled angrily to himself. It wasn't like Yu couldn't hear him though; Justin wasn't exactly the most subtle person out there after all.

"You know; you can't be beating yourself up over what could have happened. You saved her life. That's all that matters." Yu tried to comfort Justin, placing his hand on Justin's shoulder in the process. Justin sighed a bit.

"You think I don't know that? I just..."

"Can't stop thinking about it."

"Yeah..." Justin paused for a moment. He knew he didn't do anything wrong, he knew that he couldn't keep beating himself up over stuff that didn't even happen. But he couldn't stop himself. It wasn't just something you could forget, something you could pretend never happened. Hell, he couldn't even stop himself from thinking about it in his dreams. Not that he had to worry much about that, since he hadn't been getting much sleep anyway. Every time he dozed off, the horrifying images that rushed through his mind woke him up in a cold sweat.

"I thought you wanted to protect the people you loved? You protected her didn't you?" Yu pointed out. Justin just groaned a bit. Sure, maybe he did protect her; but he was the one who even pushed her that far in the first place. That's not protecting, that's retribution. And besides; why did he have to say love? If there was one thing he didn't want to think about right now, it was love. It amazed Justin how a feeling so wonderful could hurt so much. Yu could tell Justin was getting a bit irritable by this point. It was kind of a sensitive topic after all.

"...She said she loved me." Justin choked up, twirling around his lit cigarette between his fingers. He didn't want to talk about love; he didn't want to think about it. But his heart seemed to be taking precedence over his mind by this point. Which might not necessarily be bad thing when you consider what resided in his brain.

"Who? Ai?"

"No. Chie." Justin glared at Yu slightly. He knew he was being a bit vague, but he would have thought Yu would no better than to think he was talking about Ai. Besides, he already knew the story; he should have known that Ai had a thing for Daisuke.

"Ah..." Yu remarked, a slight grin making his way across his face. He understood what the problem was now; what was bothering Justin. It was love, plain and simple. And sure, Ai damn near jumping off a building was certainly on his mind, but it wasn't what was eating away at his insides right now. "Sounds like you're a little lovesick." Justin glared at Yu slightly. He did not want to talk about this, he didn't need Yu ridiculing him about love. "So what'd you do?"

Justin paused for a moment, staring towards the surface of the roof where his hand had been holding him in place. What he did? Well he did a lot of things really; like chew her out for assuming he was cheating on her for one. But that's not what Yu was asking about, was it? He was asking if Justin said it back. Justin bit his bottom lip a bit before turning back to Yu.

"I said I did too." Yu started laughing slightly to himself, much to Justin's anger. "Hey, shut the fuck up. Like you know jackshit about love." Justin spat out, annoyed that Yu was finding such amusement in the pain in his chest, the thought that was stirring away it his insides, burning away at his heart strings. Yu didn't seem at all offended by Justin's outburst though; in fact, he just continued smiling as Justin tried to chew his head off.

"That's not why I'm laughing." Yu explained. "You love her. She loves you. So what's the problem? Just be happy, man." Yu's smile was incredibly infectious; though Justin was in no mood to be cracking any smiles.

"It's not that simple."

"It's always that simple." Yu rebutted. He swore he could have given him this exact same lecture a while back. Justin sighed a bit, puffing out some hot air from his nose as he looked over to the horizon, over the trees and the small town in the distance. It was really a wonderful view. Too bad it would always remind him of what had almost conspired here that day.

"One of these days that's going to stop working." Justin groaned a bit. It wasn't even working that much right now; he just wanted to stop talking about him and Chie. He'd sort things out later; he didn't need Yu's constant patronage, his

constant mocking. It was quiet for a while between the two, save the occasional sound of Justin exhaling smoke. It was perhaps a good five or so minutes before Justin turned to Yu. He still hadn't answered his question. "You going to tell me what happened with that eye, or what?"

"Huh? Oh... Uh... Yosuke sort of beat the ever living crap out of me." Yu explained, a half grin on his face, a shrug on his shoulders. Justin just raised an eyebrow with confusion and shock. *Yosuke... Beat the crap out of Yu... Okay, first of all, aren't those two, like, best friends? And besides, I thought Yosuke would have won...*

"I'm serious."

"So am I." Yu's expression tensed up slightly; as though annoyed that Justin was questioning him. He hadn't lied to Justin yet... Well, except that whole social link thing, but that was for obvious reasons. Point was, Justin had no reason not to trust him. "It was all in good nature though; just him trying to work out some issues, you know?" Yu tried to explain, to make it clear to Justin that this wasn't just Yosuke getting pissed and trying to beat the shit out of Yu. He had agreed to it; there were no hard feelings between the two.

"And you lost."

"...Just a little." Yu rubbed at the back of his head slightly. It was a bit embarrassing to think Yosuke had beaten him in a fist-fight. Or at least, it was embarrassing how Justin was giving him that 'are you fucking kidding me' stare. But c'mon; the guy hit harder than he looked like he could. I mean, he had a black eye, but you should see what his gut looked like right about now. Purple everywhere.

Justin shook his head for a moment before tossing his cigarette off the roof. He didn't even care if anyone found it anymore. Maybe it was that whole run in with Naoto that was doing it, maybe it was just all this crazy bullshit that was happening around him, but he just didn't care. Not about the smoke, not about anything really. Yu passed Justin a small expression of concern as he watched the rolled up cigarette fall to the dirt three stories below them. He knew Justin was usually very careful about discarding those, so clearly something was up. He sighed a bit before turning back to Justin, a slight glare on his face.

"Let it go..." Yu ordered softly. That's all there was to it, really. Justin was gripping onto something that didn't even happen. Justin would beg to differ, though; it wasn't even just Ai. It was what had happened to Marooka, that argument he had with Chie, that confession of love between the two... Just... Everything. He couldn't handle all of this right now.

"It's so easy for you to say. What are your problems? Can't ask a girl out? You don't know shit; don't act like you do." Justin countered as he pushed himself up from the ledge. He just couldn't sit there and listen to this anymore. Yu stood up to follow,

though Justin shot him a glare as he did; sending him back to his place along the ledge of the roof, just watching as Justin walked away, hands in his pocket, sight aimed towards the ground.

"Just let go..." Yu remarked one last time as Justin went to round the corner to go down the staircase. For some reason, repeating himself had stopped Justin dead in his tracks. For a moment, he just stared at the stairs below him, before eventually turning his gaze over to Yu. His eyes were tired, as though they didn't have the energy to scream out in pain anymore. Justin shook his head for a moment.

"...I can't." Justin sighed before taking his final leave down the staircase and out the front door of the school.

"Why does this shit always have to happen to me..."

Justin was walking around near the Junes, pacing about as he tried to clear his mind. He figured maybe just pacing about would get the old brain juices working again, and he could finally push these thoughts out of his head, get on with his life. But it seemed that all pacing about did was leave him alone with his thoughts. Nothing he did could really keep his mind off of it at this point. He sighed slightly as he pushed on ahead, eyes looking down at his feet as they tapped against the concrete below them.

Or at least, that's what he had been starring at at first. He eventually found himself looking at his arm, rolling his sleeve up slightly to get a glance at the bandage that hid it. Something he said to Ai a couple days ago really was sticking with him. These bandages weren't just some sort of fashion statement, were they? I mean, no one could see them... No, they were just a reminder. A reminder of the nightmare he had left behind in California. They'd always be there; just like the scars his father had left on Justin as a child. Just like the memory of Ai standing at the ledge would scar his mind for years and years to come. He just couldn't forget it; he realized that. No matter how much he tried to ignore it, tell himself everything had ended alright, he just couldn't shake the thought of her body hitting the pavement three stories below. He kept telling himself that it never happened, that she was alive and well. Yet despite knowing full well she was alright, that he had stopped her from doing the unthinkable, his heart kept trying to play tricks on his mind; feeding him bullshit thoughts, bullshit memories of what had never happened.

And then there was Chie... She had thought he had been cheating on her with Ai. In a way, that speech hurt a lot more now knowing what he did now. She loved him right? And he loved her. She said she trusted him, right? Then he had to have done something horribly wrong to make her feel so betrayed, to not trust him. It wasn't her fault that she had thought Justin was doing something wrong; it was his own and no one else's. He gave her reason not to trust him. And it hurt to think that

even though he loved her, that just wasn't enough. He was pulling away at her heartstrings, drowning away her heart with worry and doubt. He just wasn't good for her. Every fiber of his being said he should stay away, let her move on, forget him and all he had done to hurt her. But he couldn't let go of her. He loved her too much. If she were to leave, it would just break his heart again. And this time, a broken heart just might be enough to do him in.

Justin sighed a bit. Everything he did, everywhere he went, everything just seemed to turn to shit. Sometimes he wondered if things would have been better if he never existed. Maya would still be with her family at home, she would never have picked up that gun and put a bullet or six in Falcone's torso. Chie wouldn't constantly be worrying about what Justin was doing when she wasn't around, he wouldn't be able to play her heartstrings like a guitar any longer. He could try to say he was protecting her, stopping her from being hurt anymore by the shadows; but really, who was the one hurting her more? Him or the monsters in the television? Justin couldn't honestly see the difference.

“Boo hoo, cry me a fucking river.”

Justin groaned a bit as he heard his Shadow's voice coming from his reflection in the window. Its image was faint, but still very much pleasant. And for the last fifteen or so minutes, he had insisted on making snide remarks about Justin and his state of mind. Justin just sort of huffed at him as he continued to pace around.

“What's wrong, don't want to talk to your inner demon? I'm hurt. Welp, mark that off as someone else who's life you fucked up.” The shadow continued to push Justin. Justin stopped to stare at the reflection for a moment, a blank expression on his face. Normally, his shadow pissed him the fuck off, but today? He was having a hard time disagreeing. Except maybe that remark about fucking his shadow's life over. He didn't care about his shadow's life one bit. In fact, if he had the choice, he'd end it right here and now. But he didn't. Not if he wanted to keep his brain where it was anyway.

“Kindly shut up.” Justin ordered his shadow. The shadow just laughed maniacally at that.

“Oh, what's wrong? Am I offending you? Is what I'm saying too much for you to bear? Tough shit kid, I speak only the truth.”

“You speak twisted lies and half-truths.” Justin countered, no real enthusiasm or anger in his voice. If there was one advantage to feeling totally dead inside, it was that the mind was clear and emotions couldn't cloud your judgment. The shadow smirked slightly. It was like Justin knew him so well. What with them being the same person and all.

“You got me kid. I’m a rogue and a scoundrel. But then so are you.” The shadow laughed slightly, though Justin didn’t so much as blink. **“Come on, don’t you just hate what you are? What you do to everyone? Don’t you just hate how everywhere you go, trouble is sure to follow? There’s a solution for that you know.”** The shadow laughed as he pressed two of his fingers against the side of his skull, making the motion of firing off a gun. Justin glared only slightly at that. He was depressed, but not suicidal.

“So I just realized all I have to do is walk away from this window and I don’t have to put up with your bullshit anymore. So bye.” Justin shook his head as he went to walk away, walking close to the walls of the Junes so that his reflection couldn’t be picked up from a far. Of course, there were other windows, and his shadow had no intention of letting up.

“What’s wrong? Gonna keep running from the truth? The truth HURTS don’t it?”

“Yes it does.” Justin sighed as he continued to walk. Or at least, for a moment. As he approached the gap in the wall that signified the entrance to the Junes. Normally he would have been looking where he was going, but he was much too occupied arguing with his reflection. So he totally didn’t see someone walking out, shopping bag in hand as the two collided, tripping over each other in the process. Justin hit the floor pretty hard, though he was more concerned about the other person. This was just more proof that he could not be trusted around people.

“Gah, FUCK!” Justin groaned as he pushed himself up from the ground, dusting off his jacket slightly as he turned around to see who he bumped into. “I’m so sorry... Adachi?” Justin raised an eyebrow in confusion. It was still bright out, so he would have assumed Adachi would still be on duty. You know, with them having a suspect for the murder case and all. Adachi rubbed the back of his head as he stood up, silently muttering some obscenities under his breath. Justin couldn’t make out WHICH obscenities, but he could tell he probably didn’t want to know which ones anyway.

“Huh? Oh it’s you.” Adachi grinned a bit as he rubbed at his back, trying to stand back up on his two feet. He didn’t really hit the ground that hard, though he did have to wonder where the hell his groceries had gone to in the scuffle now.

“Something I can help you with?”

“No, no... Just... wandering around...” Justin remarked, slightly embarrassed as he rubbed at the back of his head. “So uh... What brings you here?” Justin tried to change the topic from the awkward collision they had just made. Adachi seemed to frown with slight surprise as Justin asked him what was up to. He had somewhat assumed that Dojima had sent him to spy on him.

"What's it look like? I'm working. It's easy to investigate here with all the people around. It's cool in the summer and warm in the winter. It's a pretty good place to..." Adachi paused as Justin leaned over to pick up Adachi's bag for him, having noticed it in the distance. Though not without looking inside at it's contents first. They were groceries. Justin raised an eyebrow slightly as Adachi nervous stammered, trying to cover his basis as he realized Justin had caught him red-handed in the lie. "Yeah, I think I've said enough!"

"...You only bought cabbages?" Justin pointed out as he passed the bag off to Adachi. Adachi nervously snagged the bag out of Justin's hand, laughing the fakest laugh Justin had ever heard. Clearly he was nervous about Justin finding out he had been doing some grocery shopping. Justin shook his head slightly. "I'm not your boss Adachi. I think I can keep a secret about you doing some grocery shopping..." Justin was still pretty confused about the whole 'only cabbages' thing, but he wasn't going to press Adachi on his taste in food. Adachi's startled expression soon subsided to one of pleasant surprise. His paycheck was safe for another day.

"Oh? That's a little strange..." Adachi remarked. Justin just passed him a 'are you fucking kidding me look' in response. *You want to talk strange? Let's talk about that bag of cabbage in your hand right now.* "What are you doing here? Killing time?" Adachi questioned, letting his guard down only slightly at Justin's announcement that Adachi's secret was safe with him.

"Not really. Just trying to gather my thoughts, you know?" Justin replied, sighing slightly as his mind returned back to the memories of the last couple of days. It sent a slight shiver down his spine, though nothing Adachi really picked up on.

"Tough to do out here in the sticks, isn't it? There's nothing here. It's not like the city at all." Adachi mused out loud, a somewhat disappointed expression on his face. Justin didn't know Adachi came from the city, so he was slightly surprised. Still, he was finding it hard to agree with Adachi. There might be less to do, but he supposed he liked that there was less to do. It made the town seem less frantic, less over-populated. More solitary and small, you know? Justin could certainly work with solitary.

"It's certainly different." Justin put it delicately. He liked this place more, but there was no doubt that it was much different from the city. And there really was nothing to do outside of Junes. Thank god Justin ended up making friends here when he did; he damn well might have put a bullet through his forehead from boredom if he didn't have their company to keep things interesting. That or he'd just play video games. He'd like to go with the bullet in the forehead though; just to be a little melodramatic. Adachi smiled a bit at Justin's response.

"I knew you'd understand. You're from the city too, right?" Justin nodded slightly at Adachi's question. He was a little concerned as to how Adachi knew that, but he was just going to assume they had records on him at the station or something. Probably

the same files as the ones Naoto tried to threaten him with. He really would not be surprised if that was the case. Adachi rubbed at the back of his head with annoyance and embarrassment. "Get this; My first assignment here was tracking down a cat."

"Pfft- Really?" Justin chuckled slightly. He found it absolutely hilarious that the police were dispatching detectives to catch cats. Either they had nothing better to do with their officers of the law, or they seriously needed to adjust their priorities. Adachi groaned slightly. He could definitely see why that was laughable.

"My suit got so dirty... And they wouldn't let me expense the dry cleaning bill!" Adachi continued to rant. Justin shrugged a bit, his eyebrows rising with slight amusement. "Next, I played peacemaker in a spat some married couple was having. I can't believe they've got the police doing that stuff." Adachi continued, a disappointed tone to his voice.

"Well, was it a violent spat, or...?" Justin questioned curiously. Adachi wasn't really giving him much detail to say whether that was ridiculous or not. Adachi shook his head slightly, a look of unfulfillment on his face. Clearly he wasn't very satisfied with the way they were treating him at the police department; sending him on all sorts of stupid errands.

"No. Just arguing." Adachi answered, shaking his head. It was quiet for a moment before Adachi raised his eyes from their view of the ground to look Justin back in the eyes. His look of disappointment gave way to one of slight determination. "But it's been more dangerous lately, so I can't kick back. There's that one case, you know? It's still not solved yet." Adachi sighed a bit. Justin raised his eyebrow with puzzlement.

"I heard you guys had a suspect." Justin remarked. He probably shouldn't have in retrospect. After all, that was sort of private information. Though if anyone asked, he'd just blame it on Naoto and get her kicked off the force. That would teach her for harassing him and Maya. Adachi didn't seem all that fazed by Justin's remark, however. He just nodded in slight confirmation, not really caring that a seemingly irrelevant third-party might know something he shouldn't have.

"The higher-ups don't know what to do... They keep changing procedure on the fly..." Adachi muttered in disappointment. It was a moment before it really struck him that he just told a pedestrian the police have no idea what they're doing. He quickly recoiled a bit, rubbing at the back of his head as he tried to cover his bases. "Oops! I hope I'm not making you nervous. You guys have nothing to worry about, you know. Us police are on the job!"

"I'm sure you guys'll get him." Justin tried to reassure Adachi, feeling as though Adachi didn't quite believe the police force had any idea what to do. Adachi smiled

widely at that, giving a slight nod of confirmation before turning to face away from Justin and towards the street.

“Well, time for me to get back to work.” Adachi had started to walk away, when suddenly he froze in place, slight horror in his eyes before he came running back around and hiding behind Justin, ducking slightly since he was taller than him. Justin was a little confused at first, and had tried to turn around to see what the fuck Adachi was doing, though Adachi just grabbed him by the wrists and turned him back around for full cover.

Justin had to force himself not to laugh when he realized Adachi was hiding from an elderly woman that had been walking by. Seemed like a silly thing to want to hide from, but Adachi didn’t care. He hid from her all the same, and didn’t come back out until she was clear out of sight, a sigh of great relief on his breath as she passed. Justin turned around to face Adachi, a smug look on his face, arms crossed in slight mock.

“Phew, that was close...” Adachi announced as he made his way out of cover.

“Yes, that little old woman almost got you, man.” Justin mocked. Adachi shot him a slight glare as he stood up, straightening out his jacket a bit from having been crouched behind Justin for a minute or so.

“I’d better go. You should hurry on home too.” Adachi remarked, a slight smile on his face as he walked past Justin, ready to depart for real this time. Or at least it seemed so at first. After a couple of steps, he turned around to meet Justin’s gaze once again. “Don’t tell Dojima-san I was in Junes, okay?” Adachi requested a smile on his face. Justin crossed his arms and smiled back, shaking his head in slight disbelief. *This guy...*

“I will not tell the police officer who I barely know about your grocery list. You have my word.” Justin chuckled with slight sarcasm.

December 8, 2011

“You want to lend a hand, or are you just going to sit on your lazy ass all day?”

The two shadows stood there in the alleyway as Maya’s shadow fiddled around with the dumpster that housed all of Maya’s cigarettes. She had dropped off a huge batch but a few moments ago, and Maya’s shadow had devised a clever plan of offing her.

“You seriously think this is going to work?” Justin’s shadow remarked, slightly irritated by Maya’s shadow’s constant bitching. He put up with it on a normal basis, mind you, but it was getting particularly annoying as of late. It was always ‘help me kill my counterpart’ this and ‘you’re stupid, kill your otherself,’ that. What if he didn’t want to? Why wasn’t it an option for him to just fucking stay?

“Not if I don’t get it fucking done, it won’t. Unscrew that leg.” Maya’s shadow ordered Justin’s shadow. He groaned as he pushed himself away from the wall he was leaning against at the moment, ducking to get into reach of the dumpster leg. He didn’t have a screwdriver, but he did have change in his pockets. Why you ask? Do shadows need money? No. It was a double-sided coin he kept around for getting people to do what he wanted by faking a bet. It almost never worked though; he had a reputation for being a lying bastard. Still, he stuck the ridge of the coin in the screw, turning it about to twist the screw out far enough that he could undo the rest with his hand. As he did the back of the dumpster damn near tipped over. Any real weight applied to it would cause it to tip over immediately. The shadow sighed as the two backed away from the now loose dumpster.

“So this is supposed to tip over and trap her under. Is that what I’m supposed to be getting out of this?” Justin’s shadow remarked, staring at the dumpster as he backed up to the wall again to lean against it. Maya’s shadow groaned a bit as Justin’s shadow started to question the plan again. She had gone over this at least four times now, and she was getting really fed up with repeating herself.

“She’ll grab on, the dumpster will tip over and crush her, I’ll get a denial out of her, and then I’ll do the finishing blow. Why is that so fucking hard for you to remember?” Maya’s shadow scoffed at him, much to Justin’s shadow’s displeasure. Thing had been getting pretty damn tense between the two as of late, but now he was just getting outright pissed. He had enough of being bossed around like some sort of infant.

“The part where you’re a cold hearted bitch apparantly.” Justin glared, pushing his way off the wall a little to get a better view of Maya’s shadow. **“I am not your slave; get that through your fucking head.”**

“Oh you’re not? What are you going to do? Shoot me? Fuck off Tylor; you’ll do what you’re told.” Maya’s shadow snarled back. Justin stepped forward, his fist withdrawn. For a moment he was about to deck Maya’s shadow right across the face, but something about the look in her eyes made him back down. They were vicious, commanding almost. She wasn’t the slightest bit afraid of Justin’s shadow, that much was for sure. Justin’s shadow groaned loudly, his vocal chords echoing with anger as he threw his hands up in the air.

“And who died and made you queen!” Justin’s shadow barked back, very irritated by the treatment he was receiving. She was always so bossy, and he was

getting so fucking sick of it. He wasn't just some tool she could use whenever she wanted; he was his own goddamn person, and he would be treated as such. Maya's shadow spat off to the side in a mocking gesture, as though to say that Justin's shadow wasn't worth giving the slightest shit about.

"You if you don't shut the fuck up." Maya's shadow remarked, shaking her head in the process. Justin's shadow turned to walk away, ready to leave behind Maya's shadow and all he bullshit. He stopped after a couple of steps, however, turning back around with anger in his eyes, teeth clenched together with fury. Maya's shadow stared back at him in a daring fashion, as though to dare him to keep walking and watch what happened.

"One of these days, you're going to need my help. And when you look up at me and cry 'save me,' I'll look down and spit on your fucking ashes."

"Is that a threat?"

"That's a promise."